



## **Total Consecration to Jesus through Mary According to St. Louis de Montfort**

### **What is Total Consecration?**

Consecration is setting apart for God a person, place or thing. Total Consecration is a giving of oneself to Jesus Christ through the hands of His Mother the Blessed Virgin Mary. The person who makes this Total Consecration seeks to deepen his or her relationship with Christ that is established in baptism and to live it dynamically. Total Consecration is made by an Act of Consecration after a time of preparation through prayer and reflection on the truth of who Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Wisdom, is and who Mary is as the Mother of God in one's own life.

### **Where did the idea of Total Consecration come from?**

Total Consecration comes from the spiritual teaching of St. Louis Marie de Montfort, a French priest (1673-1716) who saw the need for people to grow in their relationship of love with Jesus Christ. He was inspired to understand that "the surest way" to do this was to grow in a relationship of love with the Mother of Jesus. This idea of giving oneself into the hands of the Blessed Virgin Mary was not a new idea. It grew out of the profound devotion to the Blessed Mother that has always been of the very fabric of the life of the Church. However, St. Louis de Montfort made explicit in his teaching that the end of any devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary was to give oneself to Jesus her Son. As a result, deepening one's love and devotion to the Mother of God as expressed in Total Consecration deepens one's love for Jesus.

### **What are the characteristics of Total Consecration?**

**Total Consecration is Christocentric.** Since all we do should give glory and honor to God, it is not surprising that our relationship with His Holy Mother should have as its goal our growth in love and devotion to her Son who is true God and true Man. It makes perfect sense that she who loved Him above all and gave herself entirely to Him to fulfill His Holy Will would lead us always to Him, God-made-Man, so that we can give ourselves to Him in imitation of her. St. Louis in his work *True Devotion* teaches, "Jesus, Our Savior, true God and true man, must be the ultimate end of all our devotions..." (# 61)

**Total Consecration is Trinitarian.** Since the object of our Faith is One God in Three Divine Persons, it should not surprise us that the Prayer for Total Consecration given to us by St. Louis is Trinitarian. In the writings of St. Louis, God is the Father, the Fountainhead of love. God is the Eternal and Incarnate Wisdom, Jesus Christ true God and true Man. God is the Holy Spirit by whose overshadowing of the Virgin Mary the Word was made flesh. The goal of Total Consecration is to deepen our relationship of love with God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and to act as "other Christs" bringing the Gospel to others.

**Total Consecration is "total".** According to St. Louis de Montfort, all that we have and possess must be given to Mary and, consequently, to Jesus. This is a powerful antidote for us living in a culture that tells us that we are defined by our possessions and our self-will. This prevailing attitude can lead us to give begrudgingly only part of who we are to God, and to be attached to the things of this world even sin. Total Consecration enables a person to see himself or herself as owning nothing because all comes from God and all belongs to Him. It helps a person to see that his or her identity and happiness depend on God alone. Giving ourselves totally to Our Lady is a sure way of giving ourselves completely to God. It is living to the fullest Mary's response to God's plan, "Let it be done unto me according to Your word." (Lk 1:38) While we already belong to Christ by our baptism, Total Consecration is an active giving all to God by a renewal of one's baptismal promises. The person surrenders to God totally and finds true life in his or her relationship with Christ.

**Total Consecration is Marian.** This Consecration is Marian because Jesus Christ the Eternal Wisdom came to us by becoming incarnate in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Our Lady's "Yes" made her the Mother of God and gave her a central role to play in God's plan of salvation. While St. Louis teaches us that Jesus alone is the consecration to the Father, he also maintains that this Consecration is incarnational and takes place in the Virgin Mary through God's grace. Because, according to the Father's plan, Jesus came to us through His Mother Mary, through her we can go to Him. Consecration to Jesus as the Incarnate Word cannot exclude her whom the Father has chosen to stand at the center of the mystery of salvation. For St. Louis there are not two consecrations – one to Jesus and one

to Mary – rather, there is only one – the Total Consecration to Jesus, the fruit of the womb of the Virgin Mary. St. Louis notes, “We consecrate ourselves at one and the same time to the most Holy Virgin and to Jesus Christ...”. She is the Mother of Christ and the Mother of the Church, Christ’s Body of which we are members. Therefore, she is our Mother who brings us always to her Son. Consequently, this Total Consecration as a renewal of our baptismal promises is necessarily Marian.

***Total Consecration is Apostolic.*** The ultimate goal for Total Consecration is to bring about “the reign of Jesus Christ” (TD #227). By Total Consecration St. Louis seeks to assemble “a great squadron of valiant soldiers of Jesus and Mary, a squadron of men and women to combat the world” (TD #114) and “true apostles of the latter times”. (TD # 58). Total Consecration does not turn a person in on himself or herself. Rather, this Consecration as the perfect living of one’s baptismal promises will form those who undertake this Consecration into an army of apostolic men and women who will bring about a great renewal in the Church and bring the Gospel to many others. Its goal is the new Evangelization to which the Church has called us since the Second Vatican Council.

### **Does the Church encourage Total Consecration?**

The Church clearly recognizes that the spiritual doctrine of St. Louis de Montfort provides a powerful means of bringing men and women to a deeper relationship with Christ. Pope Pius XII at the canonization of St. Louis addressed the gathered pilgrims, “Hail to you pilgrims gathered from various countries...whose love for Mary binds you together, because all of you have come to honor the guide (St. Louis de Montfort) who leads you to Mary and from Mary to Jesus.”

Pope John Paul II was a great devotee of the doctrine of St. Louis de Montfort. His Papal motto “Totus tuus” – “Totally yours” is taken from the prayer of St. Louis, “*Totus tuus ego sum et omnia mea tua sunt, O Virgo super omnia benedicta.*” (I am totally yours and all that I have is yours, O Virgin blessed above all.) As a laborer in the Solvay Chemical Plant in Krakow during the dark days of the Nazi occupation of Poland, the future Pontiff read the works of St. Louis de Montfort and came to a new and deeper appreciation of his relationship with the Mother of God. He wrote in *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* some fifty years later, “Thanks to St. Louis de Montfort, I came to understand that true devotion to the Mother of God is actually Christocentric, indeed, it is very profoundly rooted in the Mystery of the Blessed Trinity, and in the Mysteries of the Incarnation and Redemption.” Pope John Paul II recognized that the Second Vatican Council taught the same doctrine about the Mother of God in Chapter VIII of its Apostolic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*.

In his Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris Mater* (*Mother of the Redeemer*) Pope John Paul II mentions by name St. Louis de Montfort as one “who proposes consecration to Christ through the hands of Mary, as an effective means for Christians to live faithfully their baptismal commitments”. (#48) The Holy Father saw the teaching of St. Louis as key in understanding the person and role of Our Lady in the Church today.

### **Why may Total Consecration be for you?**

***If you are concerned about the sense of isolation and disconnectedness in life today, Total Consecration may be for you.*** We live in a world today that is resistant to hearing the Gospel of Jesus Christ and coming to know Him as the Savior. Many people are becoming more and more isolated and self-centered. They have lost the ability to believe in God and to realize that they can only know themselves by knowing God first. Many have lost the ability to have a relationship with others and are unaware of the importance of their spiritual life. In answer to these attitudes Total Consecration proclaims that we belong to Jesus Christ through His Holy Mother. It reminds us of our relationship with one another in the Body of Christ. This consecration tells us that we are called to live and proclaim His Gospel in and through the Church He founded.

***If you are searching for a simple Gospel-based and authentically Catholic spirituality, Total Consecration may be for you.***

- It can be done after only a thirty-three day period of prayer and preparation that is described in the book *Preparation for Total Consecration According to Saint Louis de Montfort*.
- Daily Mass and the reception of Holy Communion during the preparation is recommended. Holy Communion and confession is recommended on the day of Consecration.
- The Act of Total Consecration is made on the thirty-fourth day.
- The purpose of Total Consecration is conversion of heart and growth in holiness.

### **To Jesus through Mary.**

So if you are interested in deepening your relationship with Jesus Christ, in living your Faith more devotedly within the Church, and in bringing the Gospel to others, perhaps you should consider making this Total Consecration to Jesus Christ through His Mother Mary. After all, Jesus Himself consecrated us all to His Mother as He hung on the Cross (Jn 19:26-27). He said to her, “Behold your son.” Referring not just to St. John but to all of us. And then turning to St. John and to all of us He said, “Behold your Mother”. Can you hear Him saying “Behold your Mother” to you today?

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